

# LATIN NOTES

Published by the SERVICE BUREAU FOR CLASSICAL TEACHERS at New York University, Washington Square East, New York City. Maintained by the AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE. October to May. Price of Subscription, \$1.00 with Membership in the LEAGUE.

Entered as second class matter March 20, 1924, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Address communications to FRANCES E. SABIN, Director of the Bureau

Issued in the interests of teachers of secondary Latin and Greek

Associate Editors: MILDRED DEAN, HARRY WEDECK, CLAIRE THURSBY, MARY R. STARK, MARK HUTCHINSON, LILLIAN LAWLER

Vol. XIII

NOVEMBER, 1935

No. 2

## A PLEA TO THE PROGRESSIVE TEACHER OF LATIN

The teacher of Latin in the modern high school has certain problems which must be met courageously and intelligently, if Latin is to be saved for any considerable portion of the high school students. In my opinion, these problems will not be solved by any policy of *laissez faire* or by the hurling of invective against the educational philosophy which is running the schools and will probably run them for some time to come. It seems to me there are three major problems which demand our immediate attention. They are: 1. How shall we teach students who have no formal knowledge of English grammar to read Latin? 2. Shall we teach Latin formally or functionally? 3. How is the chief difficulty in reading Latin—the vocabulary hazard—to be overcome? Underlying all these problems is the assumption that our task as Latin teachers is primarily to bring about in our students the ability to read Latin. If our students (i. e., the rank and file of them) can actually read easy Latin and like to read it, then our problems will be solved. Most of the criticism against Latin made by educators boils down to the charge that at the end of two years the students can not read a page of easy new Latin. This accusation is largely true according to the report of the Classical Investigation and Miss Eddy's survey of foreign language instruction which appeared in 1932.<sup>1</sup>

However, I dare to believe that it is possible to teach Latin to the modern high school student, who knows no formal English grammar and has not been brought up on the doctrine of formal discipline, in such a way that at the end of his experience with Latin he can read connected discourse which contains words, forms, and constructions with which he is familiar.

But this can not be done until we know the answers to the three questions listed above. I therefore throw out the challenge to those Latin teachers who may read this article to help answer these fundamental questions. For a few years after the publication of the Classical Report the teaching of Latin in the high schools was enlivened. Latin teachers were stirred to a new enthusiasm by a project in which many of them took a part. The fires of enthusiasm need rekindling. I think this can best be done by enlisting the aid of teachers the country over in some worthwhile enterprise. There is no reason why teachers of Latin in 1935 should not act together and attempt to solve the problems which are facing them today. During the past summer at Columbia University I taught a class of experienced Latin teachers and I was greatly heartened by their enthusiasm and desire to help solve the vexing problems which faced them as Latin teachers. I am sure that they are a cross-section of the Latin teachers of the country at large.

I am pleading for a serious attempt to answer the questions which are of such paramount importance in the present day

<sup>1</sup>Helen M. Eddy, *Instruction in Foreign Languages*: Washington, United States Bureau of Education (1932), Bulletin No. 17, National Survey of Secondary Education, Monograph No. 24.

teaching of Latin in the high school. They will never be answered by opinion. We need experimentation on a grand scale with every Latin teacher worth his salt contributing his bit. Personally, I believe that the average student beginning Latin in the modern high school can not be taught Latin by the formal method. He does not have the background nor will he continue to take Latin if taught in that manner. I furthermore believe that he can be taught to read Latin without a formal or recall knowledge of forms and syntax. While I have some data to back up my opinion<sup>2</sup>, there has been no real try-out of the functional method of teaching Latin in this country. It is my belief that it is highly desirable and indeed imperative to meet the situation which is before us by thorough trial of a *bona fide* functional method of teaching Latin. Why can not those teachers who are convinced that their students are not prepared to meet the requirements of the old formal method of teaching Latin experiment with their teaching? I suggest the following as worth trying out. 1. Demand from your students a 100% recognition knowledge of forms met in their Latin reading, but do not ask for a recall knowledge, i. e., the ability to reproduce certain Latin forms. 2. Demand a 100% recognition knowledge of the usage of the forms, but do not require an explanation of the construction in grammatical terminology. 3. Do not require the writing of English into Latin, as it is purely an exercise in recall knowledge of forms and syntax. 4. Test your students' understanding of the Latin by questions on comprehension and use translation only as an exercise in English expression on passages which the students have thoroughly comprehended. If and when any considerable body of Latin teachers conscientiously try out the above method of teaching, we shall have some data on the success or lack of success of the functional method of teaching Latin. As a check-up on their teaching, they should use reliable and valid objective tests on Latin comprehension. On the other hand, teachers who are using the formal method of teaching should also use these tests to measure their students' progress. The two kinds of teaching must be compared on the basis of the students' ability to understand Latin and not on knowledge of formal grammar. Such a project should gain the whole-souled support of the Latin teachers of the United States for it would be an honest attempt to answer the question whether pupils with no background of formal English grammar can be taught to read Latin. Unless this question is satisfactorily answered, we can not expect to keep Latin in the modern high school.

My third problem, which has to do with the vocabulary hazard in the reading of Latin, is probably even more important. Most of our first and second year Latin texts have easy reading which, because of its high vocabulary "density" (i. e., proportion of new words to running words), is not easy at all. If we wish our students to read and enjoy Latin, we must provide

<sup>2</sup>See my article "Realism in Latin Teaching," *The Classical Journal* XXX, (1935), 477-488.

(Continued from page 1)

them with reading material in which the proportion of new words to running words is kept low. I suggest that Latin teachers examine their reading books critically as to vocabulary "density" and demand readers which do not have such a vocabulary hazard. Furthermore we need a new frequency list for vocabulary based on a wider range of Latin authors. This is a project which should be undertaken by a large number of professionally-minded Latin teachers and that as soon as possible.

Latin teachers in the high school have a great heritage and a great opportunity to make their subject a vital part of the twentieth century high school. Let us develop a new *esprit de corps* and as a body of progressive teachers meet the situation which is before us.

MARK E. HUTCHINSON  
Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa

### GRATIAS AGIMUS!

THE SERVICE BUREAU wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the large number of friends who have once again, unsolicited, sent in an extra dollar, or more, toward the maintenance of its work. It is such loyalty as this which heartens the Director and her staff in the midst of their arduous tasks. We trust that our generous friends will read in these lines the expression of appreciation which it is impossible to embody in personal letters to each contributor.

### A LATIN PROGRAM

The following program is announced for the meeting sponsored by THE AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE in connection with the forty-ninth annual convention of THE MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS to be held at Haddon Hall, Atlantic City, on Saturday, November 30th. The meeting begins at 10:00 A. M. All teachers of the classics are cordially invited to attend.

1. An Appraisal of Newer Practices in Latin Teaching

J. W. WRIGHTSTONE, Research Associate in the Institute of School Experimentation, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York

2. Enter the Ghost: Some Problems in Latin Dramatics

LILLIAN B. LAWLER, Hunter College, New York

3. Round Table Discussion: What is Functionalism in Latin Teaching?

Presiding: WREN JONES GRINSTEAD, University of Pennsylvania

Leaders of the Discussion:

W. L. CARR, Teachers College, Columbia University  
Functionalism in the Structure of the Latin Language

MARGARET Y. HENRY, Franklin K. Lane High School, Brooklyn

Functionalism in the Content of Latin Studies

DAVID A. HUBER, Germantown Academy, Germantown, Pennsylvania

Functionalism in the Organization of Latin Subject Matter

JOHN F. GUMMERE, William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia

Our New Freedom in Preparing for the College Entrance Board Examinations

Material from THE SERVICE BUREAU will be on exhibition from nine o'clock till three in the room where the meeting is held.

### WHY WE NEED THE FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

It was an extremely interesting class which I visited the other day, a ninth grade Latin class. The teacher was a splendid, upstanding specimen of an American woman, gentle and kindly, but firm and exact. The children were eager to learn and had very evidently worked hard. She called a name and a shining little girl stood up to answer.

"Decline a first declension noun." It went off perfectly in Latin. "Give the principal parts of *dare*." This also came true to form. "Give the present indicative of *dare*." "*Dare, darae, darac, daram, dara*—" The teacher and class both laughed spontaneously, and the former said pleasantly, "You are treating a verb like a noun. *Do* is the first person, *das* the second." The little girl took the word up and finished it perfectly in Latin. A boy gave several adjectives and when asked to compare *gratus*, gave *grato, gratare, gratavi, gratus*.

The same kind of mistake occurred many times, mistake arising from uncertainty about the names of parts of speech and the technical terms necessary in dealing with them. All the vocabulary of grammar, person, voice, number, case, genitive, object, and the other fifty or sixty that are so common to us and so necessary to the old way of teaching Latin, are really harder for the children to grasp than the memorized cases and verb endings of the Latin itself. When the pupils were started on the forms to be recited, one could see how hard they had worked memorizing the series. But they could not link up the names with the forms, and use and meaning were still further afield.

Some good resolutions will help the teacher change over from the "memorize-and-recite-whether-you-understand-it-or-not" period to the idea that the use and meaning of a form are the most important things to be learned in Latin.

Resolution 1. We will never decline a noun without giving the meaning of every case, nor inflect a verb without giving the meaning of every form.

Resolution 2. We will never ask a question that is not a transfer of idea from Latin to English or English to Latin. E. g., I will never ask, "What is the accusative of that noun?" but rather, "How do you spell that noun when the verb is acting upon it?" We will never ask for the third person singular passive imperfect of a verb, but will say, "Translate 'it was bounded'."

This change is a very important one for us to make, first, because the children have been taught no grammar in the elementary schools, but chiefly because the one deep impression they have received from the grades is the knowledge that they do not really own a fact till they can understand its use and can handle it. That is why they say, "What is Latin about? I do not understand what we are doing." If we organize our class work from the point of view of how to use these words in Latin and how to understand them in a Latin sentence, our work will have a spontaneous quality that arises from the children's understanding and enjoyment.

MILDRED DEAN  
Supervisor of Latin, Washington, D. C.

### LEAGUE NOTES

The officers of THE LEAGUE wish to thank Miss Sabin for the opportunity of carrying regular monthly announcements. They deeply appreciate also the efforts of all the members who have helped to make the beginning of this year a successful one.

As to attacks upon the Classics appearing in newspapers and magazines, a tentative plan has been worked out. Those of purely local character should be answered locally, through the assistance, if necessary, of the state Chairman in the proper section, working with Miss Latta's Committee. A list of such Chairmen will be published in the next number of LATIN NOTES. Assaults of wider scope, demanding answer on a nation-

al scale, if from the Far West and Middle West, should be referred to a Lookout Committee, the Chairman of which will be announced next month, and those from Southern and Eastern territory should be sent to the Secretary, who at present will attempt to deal with all articles of this type from whatever section they may come. Meanwhile, friendly relations have been established with two magazines of national circulation which have promised to carry LEAGUE publicity on the Classics.

Teachers are also requested to send in to the LEAGUE clippings from newspapers and general (not classical) magazines which contain classical allusions or articles of interest to classicists. Typewritten copies may also be submitted. But, in any case, the source and date of each clipping or copy should be clearly indicated. Students have been secured at Washington Square College who will file and arrange clippings with a view to future publication.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members of THE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE ATLANTIC STATES may like to know that the address of the President, Helen S. MacDonald, has been changed recently. Letters will reach her at THE SERVICE BUREAU, or at her home, 55 Morton Street, New York City.

Word comes to THE SERVICE BUREAU that Miss Mildred Dean of Washington, D. C. has been invited to serve on a Commission on Examinations in Latin for the College Entrance Examination Board. This is good news for all of us who are vitally concerned with the interests of high school boys and girls in the Latin classes. The Editor feels sure that she will welcome opinions of classical teachers as to what can be taught in the public schools of today with a well-grounded hope of attainment.

Professor Robert C. McClelland, College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, Virginia, has prepared a Horace Pageant in typewritten form, entitled *A DAY IN MAECENAS' GARDEN*. He writes that he will be glad to have copies distributed free of charge (except for postage) to schools which desire to present it. A copy may be seen at THE SERVICE BUREAU but orders must be sent directly to the author.

Professor Harold L. Cleasby's Horatian plays, *THE OWL* and *SATURNALIA ON THE SABINE FARM*, mentioned in earlier issues of *LATIN NOTES*, are now available in printed form. The two plays, bound together, may be obtained for 25 cents from the author, at Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

Probably there is no ten-cent bulletin for sale which contains more useful material for classical and English teachers than W. A. Ellis' *WORD ANCESTRY*. Since the supply is nearing exhaustion and reprinting is doubtful, all those who have failed to secure copies should order at once. Both the *Chicago Daily News* and THE SERVICE BUREAU have a limited supply at present.

The Editor is happy to say that a reprinting of Bulletin XXVII—*A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF GREEK MYTH IN ENGLISH POETRY* by Professor Helen Law of Wellesley College has made it possible to lower the price to 75 cents. It is safe to say that nowhere can one find so exhaustive and accurate a list of poems dealing with Classical Mythology as the one which Miss Law has compiled.

Miss Dorothy Park Latta, who is in charge of the organization of SERVICE BUREAU workers in each state, hopes to have the list of Chairmen printed in the December *NOTES*. The en-

thusiasm of these officials in securing memberships in THE AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE and in supplying all local Chairmen of meetings with an exhibit of SERVICE BUREAU material, as well as in watching for any and all contributions of experienced teachers to THE SERVICE BUREAU files, promises much for the prosperity of our movement during the coming year.

### CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS

If you must give a Latin Christmas entertainment next month or wish to show the connection between the Roman Saturnalia and our modern Christmas, THE SERVICE BUREAU has the following mimeographed material that may be borrowed for postage only or purchased at the prices indicated (postage extra):

- 160. Christmas and the Roman Saturnalia, 5 cents.
- 163. Some paragraphs about Christmas written in easy Latin, 5 cents.
- 236. More about the Saturnalia, 5 cents.
- 294. *Officium Stellae*—a liturgical play suitable for presentation at Christmas, 5 cents.
- 388. The origin of the Roman Saturnalia, 5 cents.
- 465. Suggestions for a Christmas program by the Latin department, 5 cents.
- 466. A Roman and an American Christmas compared—a play in two acts, 5 cents.
- 478. Suggestions for Latin Christmas cards, 5 cents.

Please send to THE BUREAU ideas in this connection which you have worked out with success.

### LATIN IN NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOLS

Early in September a request was sent to the Latin Departments of the public high schools to furnish information on several important points, one of which was a report as to the Latin enrollment. Has it increased, decreased, or does it remain as it was last year? Since not all of the schools have reported, the result as shown in the figures that follow cannot be regarded as final. The figures thus far show that for 50% the enrollment is larger; for 30% it is less; and for 20% it is about the same as last year.

### SHIP OF STATE

Horace's Ode XIV, Book I

O Ship of State, adrift at sea,  
What course dost thou pursue?  
The whirling breakers gore thy side.  
Wilt thou sail safely through?

Canst thou not see thy oars are gone?  
Thy side is badly torn?  
Thy keel is weak? It cannot stand  
The waves on which you're borne.

Thy sturdy sails have ceased to fly.  
The gods! Ah, where are they?  
O'erwhelmed with care and sorely tried,  
Sail on, hold fast thy way.

But thou art sprung from Pontus Pines,  
Trust to thy noble birth.  
Great is thy fame! Thy glorious name  
Proclaims thy princely birth.

O struggling barge, with tender love  
I gaze upon thy form.  
May'st thou in triumph gain the port  
And weather every storm.

SISTER MARY LOUISE, O.S.B.,  
Student at Monte Cassino School,  
Tulsa, Oklahoma



## SERVICE BUREAU MATERIAL AVAILABLE

This material appears in mimeographed or printed form. In the case of the former, the items may be borrowed with the understanding that the teacher pays the postage and returns the material within two weeks after its receipt, or they may be purchased for 5 cents each, unless another price is stated. Printed items, however, known as **LATIN NOTES SUPPLEMENTS** and **BULLETINS**, are not sent out as loans but must be purchased at the prices indicated. The material up to January first, 1935, has been listed in a printed Catalogue which is sold for 15 cents, or 20 if postage is required.

### I. In Mimeographed Form

(Numbering is continued from the October issue)

522. Directions for the Construction of Marionettes and Stage (as worked out by the pupils of *Laura M. Povey* in the High School at Norton, Massachusetts). Price, 10 cents.
523. A Suggestion for Anticipating Caesar (to be presented to pupils in the Eighth and Ninth Grades). Contributed by *Mildred Dean*, Roosevelt High School, Washington, D. C.

### II. Latin Notes Supplements

Fifty-one Supplements are ready for circulation. For titles and prices, see the CATALOGUE of SERVICE BUREAU material.

### III. Bulletins

Bulletins I, II, and III are out of print. For a list of the others, see the CATALOGUE.

Those who have the CATALOGUE should copy on the blank pages at the end the numbers and titles of the mimeographs (beginning with 501) which have appeared since its publication on January first. THE BUREAU may be able later to send out a printed list for this purpose.

#### STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

OF LATIN NOTES published 8 times yearly at New York, N. Y., for  
STATE OF NEW YORK..... } ss.      October 1, 1935  
COUNTY OF NEW YORK..... }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared **FRANCES E. SABIN**, who having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Editor and Business Manager of the **LATIN NOTES** and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, SERVICE BUREAU FOR CLASSICAL TEACHERS.  
Editor, managing editor, business manager—**FRANCES E. SABIN**,  
New York University, Washington Square East, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owner is: THE AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE, New York University, Washington Square East, New York, N. Y. Names of officers: **DR. W. L. CARR**, President, Teachers College, New York, N. Y. **DR. F. A. SPENCER**, Secretary and Treasurer, New York University, Washington Square East, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: NONE.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appear upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

**FRANCES E. SABIN**

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21 day of September, 1935.

**EARLE L. WASHBURN**,

(My commission expires March 30, 1936).

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